

THE KAISER WILHELM.

Born January 27, 1859.

THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY, WITH THE PASSAGE OF YEARS, HAS BEEN REVEALED AS A STATESMAN INSPIRED BY DEFINITE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT, BY A DEFINITE POLICY OF EXPANSION—HIS SUCCESS IN THE WORLD OF DIPLOMACY DURING HIS THIRTEEN YEARS' REIGN HAS BEEN REMARKABLE.

IN a youthful age the most notable of all young men has passed into middleage. On January 27, the Emperor of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm II, will celebrate his forty third birthday. Already his reign has spanned thirteen years—years remarkable for the development of the empire he controls, for revolution in his nation's policy.

The man who was deemed a rash, hot headed youth a dozen years ago has revealed himself a statesman, shrewd, far seeing. The creator and controller of a definite policy, the Kaiser has piloted his nation through many devious channels into open water.

To achieve this end, the Kaiser has needed to revolutionize German policy, has found it necessary to dismiss the Iron Chancellor and his theories.

Bismarck was a statesman whose life's work was the unification of Germany, the maintenance of the German Empire. From early manhood he had striven to the attainment of this great national ideal.

THE KAISER'S ASPIRATION.

Kaiser Wilhelm, coming to the throne seventeen years after the formation of



KAISER WILHELM II, THE MOST TALENTED MAN IN EUROPE.

a united Germany, was freed from much that limited the vision of Bismarck. For him the prospect of German development did not end with the 18th of January, 1871, as it had done with Bismarck. It only began then. Ambi-



FRIEDRICH WILHELM, CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY,
BORN 1882.

tion was born on the day of unification, and the opportunities of imperial development then, for the first time, became infinite. To seize those opportunities, to compel them to the service of Germany, has been the constant care of the Kaiser.

Of all nations, Bismarck feared Russia the most. To gain her neutrality, if not her friendship, he subordinated all other national interests. He even played false with Austria that he might curry favor at St. Petersburg. To please Russia he carefully cultivated in his people a hatred of England that is bearing evil fruit today. By these

means Bismarck insured the preservation of his united Germany, but limited the expansion of the empire.

The Kaiser ascended the throne to find the nation bound by treaties and secret understandings—a rampart of defense so cunningly constructed that the Germans could no more get out than the enemy could get in. Wilhelm II needed freedom for expansion. He straightway approached Great Britain, and in exchange for the island of Heligoland permitted her an extension of rights in Zanzibar. His people, ignorant of the final purpose, muttered at this early dealing with the English devil. The English, schooled in the Bismarckian philosophy, were none the less denunciatory of Lord Salisbury's action.

THE WORKINGS OF A GREAT POLICY.

Then came the day when Japan, having triumphed over China, sought her reward in territory. The Marquis Ito stretched forth his hand to grasp the status of a world power. It met the mailed fist of the German minister in company with those of France and Russia. "Thus far shall ye come and no farther!" It was the voice of the young man in Potsdam, and poor Ito in a single phrase heard the fate of his life's dream.

From that early morning visit of the German minister developed all of the present Chinese situation, the seizure of Port Arthur and the occupation of Manchuria by Russia, the seizure of Kiao-chao by Germany, and the leasing of Wei-hai-wei by Great Britain. By means of it the Kaiser had done more in a single morning for the interests of Russia than had Bismarck in twenty years. Russia was appropriately grateful.

Her gratitude, however, was neither material nor permanent. Germany joined Russia as a lease holder in China, as a rival estate owner in the far east. She opposed serious obstacles to Russia's expansion in a field she had considered her own, or shared only with Great Britain. Now Russia can move only after compensating Germany for the trouble caused her. Russia feels no welcome for Germany in China.

In the near east Russia hitherto has found her only serious opponent in Britain—the friend and supporter of Turkey. When the Armenian atrocities became too pronounced Russia set her old policy to work to crush the Ottoman Empire. She sought to achieve her end by means of the "steam roller" of the Concert of Europe. The Kaiser dominated that concert, rendered the steam roller ineffective, and earned Turkey's lasting gratitude—a gratitude that was displayed by rich concessions to German traders and by the ousting of British manufactures.

THE EMPEROR'S SUCCESS.

In the Græco Turkish war the Kaiser espoused the cause of the Sultan, lent him a capable chief of staff, and won the war for him against his own sister. In the negotiations that followed the defeat of Greece he secured the assignment of funds to pay the German holders of Greek bonds. England and Russia had pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for him.

To the Cretan affair he sent only an inferior war ship, and withdrew it long before the settlement of the island. He secured, however, the election of his nominee as governor.

Turkey was practical in her gratitude. She granted to Germany the right to build a railway—a railway ardently desired by Russia, a railway of enormous consequence to Great Britain—across Asia Minor from the Bosphorus to Bagdad, and from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, within four days of Bombay.

More than the control of the Suez Canal ever was to Great Britain, the possession of the Bagdad railway will be to Germany. It means, practically, an overland route to India, a journey from London *via* Munich and Vienna to the Persian Gulf in eleven days, and from London to Bombay in fifteen days. It means the complete flanking of Russia in Asia, the strangling of British trade in Persia and throughout Asia Minor.

In China, eighteen months ago, the Kaiser secured the tacit recognition of his general in command as commander in chief of the allied forces. That lent

Germany a prestige altogether unwarranted by her part in the operations, an importance sullenly resented by Russia.

And so the Kaiser has broken down the barriers of the Bismarckian policy, has destroyed them, and has led Germany out into new fields of commercial and national expansion.

THE PROBLEMS OF THE FUTURE.

His life's work, however, is only just beginning. On his borders is a great empire ruled by an emperor of seventy one. Austria Hungary is a union of two states joined by an unnatural marriage. Austria is western and German, Hungary is eastern and Slavonic. With the death of the Emperor Francis Josef will come the possible dissolution of the empire, the inclusion of the great western section in the empire of Germany.

The question is, should this occur, what will become of the great Slavonic portion? Will it form itself an independent monarchy? Will it endeavor to form with the Baltic provinces a Slavonic empire?

To those questions the Kaiser is bending all the strength of his remarkable intelligence, all the energies of his indomitable will. The result is not yet; but no student of contemporary politics questions his possession of a definite policy. The idea of a rash, hot headed youth playing with the edged tools of empire has long ago been dissipated. Men recognize in Kaiser Wilhelm a master mind, a sure eye, a firm hand, the most brilliant man of affairs in the world today.

The Kaiser is a man of rapid impulses, leaping at the thing he desires without in all cases counting the breadth of the jump. He fears no experiment in policy, and differs from the rest of the great men of Europe only in so far as he possesses a judgment to stop mistakes before they have seriously compromised his country. Some of them, however, have been difficult of complete arrestment. His impulsive telegram to Mr. Kruger at the time of the Jameson Raid had consequences that have not been completely arrested yet.

To him on the 27th of January a happy birthday!